

# Horizon Financial Management Gains Faster Backups and Restores, Improves Disaster Recovery with ExaGrid

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Tony Coffman**  
Director of IT  
Horizon Financial Management

## Customer Overview

Horizon Financial Management provides revenue enhancing and practice management partnerships to healthcare providers. With revenue cycle experts from both the provider and outsourcing side of the healthcare industry, the company brings together the expertise critically needed today to optimize healthcare providers' accounts receivable. From day-one billing all the way through the revenue cycle to collections, the company's programs are designed to enhance the bottom line. The company is based in Merrillville, Indiana.

## Long Backup Times with Tape Led to Performance Issues

The IT department at Horizon Financial Management (HFM) had been backing up its data to tape but found it difficult to complete backups each night because of its backup window.

"We run two shifts each day and need to ensure that our network runs at peak performance during work hours. We had been using tape but were running into performance issues because we were outside of our backup window," said Tony Coffman, Director of IT at HFM. "Tape rotation was also complex and time consuming. We had reached the point where no matter how big the tape drive was, there was no way we could complete everything during our backup window. We finally decided that the time was right to investigate other backup methods."

## Two-Site ExaGrid System Automatically Replicates Data for Disaster Recovery

After looking at several different solutions on the market, HFM chose a two-site ExaGrid disk-based backup system with data deduplication. Data is automatically backed up each night from the primary system located in the company's datacenter and replicated to the second site for disaster recovery. The two systems work along with the company's existing backup application, Symantec Backup Exec.

"The ExaGrid system works extremely well with Backup Exec, and the two products are very tightly integrated so it really reduced the learning curve," said Coffman. "Also, the ability to have our data automatically replicated each night is wonderful. We don't have to deal with moving tapes around and rotating them in and out, and we're far more confident in our ability to recover from a disaster."

## Data Deduplication Maximizes Disk Space, Delivers 23:1 Ratio

"We've been extremely impressed with ExaGrid's data deduplication technology. It's very effective at reducing our data, and it ensures that we're maximizing our disk space," said Coffman. "We're able to keep a year of retention on the ExaGrid system, so we have plenty of data available for restores." Currently, the company is seeing overall data deduplication ratios of 23.7:1 for its daily backups.

The ExaGrid system stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance. ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post-process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only changes, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.



## Backup Times Significantly Reduced, Faster Restores

Coffman said that since installing the ExaGrid system, HFM's backup times have been significantly reduced, and restores are also far faster and less painful.

"Our backups are now completed each and every night well within our backup windows," said Coffman. "One of the best things about the ExaGrid system is the restore speeds. I probably restored 20 or 30 files in the past year and with tape, restoring that data would have taken me at least a half an hour each time. With the ExaGrid, I can restore files instantaneously. It enables me to provide a higher level of support to our users."

## Easy Setup and Installation, Industry-Leading Customer Support

Coffman said that he worked closely with ExaGrid's customer support team to install the system.

"Setting up the system was easy. Once I completed the initial setup, our ExaGrid support engineer connected remotely and walked me through Backup Exec to establish retention policies, backup to disk, and the security settings. The process only took about two hours," said Coffman.

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

Coffman said that ExaGrid's customer support team has consistently provided a high level of service.

"We've been very happy with ExaGrid's customer support. I love the fact that we have a dedicated support engineer who knows us and our environment. It's so nice to know that the same engineer dealing with our account today will be the same engineer tomorrow. It's rare," he said. "We recently set up our second system at our co-location facility, and our support engineer was with us all the way. We ran into a few snags on our end, and he was extremely knowledgeable and patient. We really couldn't ask for more."

## Scalability to Handle Increased Demand

As HFM's data grows, the ExaGrid system can easily be expanded to accommodate more data. ExaGrid's GRID computing software makes the system highly scalable, and

when plugged into a switch, different sized configurations can be mixed and matched into a single GRID system with capacities of up to a 130TB full backup plus retention. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.

"ExaGrid's scalability will enable us to meet our backup needs for the foreseeable future," said Coffman. "We're growing quickly so it's nice to know that we can scale the system up when we need to."

Coffman said that installing the ExaGrid has enabled him to provide a higher level of support to his internal users.

"With the ExaGrid in place, we're able to better serve our users and management team because we're confident that our data is backed up and secured each and every night and we're able to restore data quickly. We also have a far better disaster recovery plan in place in case we have a site loss, and I have peace of mind because I don't have to deal with tapes anymore," said Coffman. "The ExaGrid really is a fantastic product."

## ExaGrid and Symantec Backup Exec

Symantec Backup Exec provides cost-effective, high performance and certified disk-to-disk-to-tape backup and recovery – including continuous data protection for Microsoft Exchange, SQL, file servers and workstations. High performance agents and options provide fast, flexible, granular protection and scalable management of local and remote server backups.

## Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid's turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality SATA drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is more cost effective than standard SATA drives. ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, resulting in a solution that is 25% to 30% the cost of standard SATA drives.

The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com) or call us at 1-800-868-6985.**